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**Col. John Augustine Washington, C. S. A.**  
*of Mount Vernon*

**By**

**Colonel Arthur Herbert**



# THE WASHINGTON ADDRESS

BY

COL. ARTHUR HERBERT

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## John Augustine Washington of Mount Vernon

*Lt.-Col. and Aide-de-Camp to General Robert Edward Lee,  
C. S. A. Killed, Valley Mountain, Sept. 13, 1861*

No soldier of fortune, no seeker of pelf,  
No lover of glory and fame,  
But simply a man who was true to himself,  
The home where he'd dwelt, and his name.

He rode far away at the call of the land,  
Unmindful of peril and fate,  
A smile on his face and a wave of his hand,  
For children who stood at the gate.

He rode by the side of the kingliest knight,  
And deemed it a guerdon to share  
His tent and the march and the danger and fight,  
To kneel by his chieftain in prayer.

He lay where he fell, with the light on his face,  
Untouched by dishonor and shame,  
Defeated, yet true to the pride of his race,  
The home where he'd dwelt, and his name.

The tears were like dew in the eyes of the chief,  
Who gazed on the form of his friend,  
And thought of the children at home and their grief,  
The blossom of life and its end.

He sent, all entwined with his pity and love,  
The flowers that grew where he fell,  
And angels, who walked on the ramparts above,  
Repeated their call, "It is well."

'Tis well, if for years he has slept 'neath the sod,  
Uncrowned by the laurels of fame,  
And simply a man who was true to his God,  
The home where he'd dwelt, and his name.

Gift  
R. Washington  
Ja. 13 1866



# Address on the Presentation of Colonel Washington's Portrait To Lee Camp

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*Mr. Commandant, Ladies and Gentlemen, and My  
Old Comrades of the days that tried men's souls:*

I am glad to be with you once more on so interesting an occasion as the reception from Col. Walter Taylor, in behalf of Lee Camp and the Washington family, of the portrait of Col. John Augustine Washington of Mt. Vernon—a sketch of whose short military career that promised so much for its future, and his tragic death has been so interestingly told and graphically given by Colonel Taylor to-night—and for which in behalf of Lee Camp and the Washington family we heartily thank him.

Let us go back some years into the past and state that the first of the Washington family, John and Lawrence, emigrated to Virginia in the year 1657 from England, bringing with them all the intelligence, hardihood and manhood of an English ancestry. It was a great day for the country at large, and Virginia in particular, when these men landed on our shores. Educated in heart and in mind as well, they became at once factors in the development of their adopted country.

From one of these, John Washington, sprang Gen. George Washington, the central figure in Co-

lonial days and the master leader and military mind of the American Revolution. Upon him eulogy has exhausted itself, and iconoclasts have tried to bring him down from the heights upon which his countrymen had placed him, but without avail. The grandeur of this man has stood the test of time. His self-abnegation, his pure and lofty ideals of duty, and his love of country before all else, except his God, have been reproduced once only in this country, in the character of Gen. Robert E. Lee, the second great Rebel Virginia has given to this country and the world at large—in both of whom dwelt every manly virtue and God-like attribute.

Col. John A. Washington was born at Blakely, Jefferson County, Virginia, May 3d, 1821, and was a great-great-nephew of General Washington of Mt. Vernon. A more beautiful country than that of his birth my eyes have rarely ever rested upon, a country of brave men and fair women, an environment that no doubt had its effect upon him as shown in his after-life.

Looking down the dim vista of fifty-six years when I first became a guest of the Washington family, I will try and recall from memory and give some idea of the life at Mt. Vernon and of the personality of its owner. I was first introduced to Mr. Washington by my brother, an old schoolmate and cotemporary of his, and nothing could have been more gracious than his reception of me. If memory serves me right, he was nearly six feet in height, his figure well knit, well proportioned and graceful in movement. His head, well poised upon his shoulders, was covered with wavy chestnut hair. His face was

all aglow with good humor and intelligence. Large brown eyes that sparkled with mirth looked the world squarely in the face, and seemed to take in only the bright side of life—and thus you have him as I first saw him. As our acquaintance deepened into friendship and I got to know him better, I was charmed to know how well read he was, and with what ease and fluency he talked of what was best in all the old standard authors, and upon the current topics of the day. You had but to ask for information and he gave it clearly and intelligently. He would have adorned any position or shone in any walk of life where his well-stored memory and culture could have been brought into play.

He seems to have been without ambition as to a political life, or of worldly advancement, for which his talents so eminently fitted him. Yet he had all the prestige that an illustrious family name could give in the pursuit of either. But his classic and beautiful home on the Potomac, and the charm in the life of a Virginia planter (which when I first knew him was the ideal one) outweighed all else in his well-balanced mind.

In Mrs. Washington he had a charming help-mate and companion, who loved her home and kept a well-ordered establishment where hospitality and true courtesy abounded.

Apart from that intangible, subtle spell and influence that all old houses of the good and the great throw around you, Mt. Vernon had another charm peculiarly its own, which was the perfect union in feeling and sentiment of the master and mistress of the house, which seemed to pervade children and

servants alike, that made the guests of Mt. Vernon glad of the repose and peace found within its portals, and there were many guests, distinguished and otherwise, that sought its shelter.

At breakfast, the first family reunion of the day, the charming and heart-felt salutations of parents and children, the deferential courtesy to each other, and their easy and unconstrained courtesy to guests, spoke well for the pleasure of the coming day. Conversation led by the master of the house flowed in easy channels, without personalities or pedantry, touching on topics that brought out only the best in the character of each guest.

Strongly attached to his beautiful old home, filled as it was with the memories of three generations of Washingtons, Colonel Washington for many reasons—among them and perhaps the most weighty of all was the constant influx of visitors from all parts of the country, and the impossibility to any longer enjoy the privacy of his home—consented at last to sell it to the Ladies' Mt. Vernon Association. With a far-sighted business sagacity he invested a part of the money received from the sale of Mt. Vernon in Chicago real estate, which but for the war between the States would have been of great value to his heirs.

After leaving Mt. Vernon he moved to his estate in Fauquier, called Waveland, after which, to my great regret, I saw very little of him.

That Gen. Robert E. Lee, who was a judge of men and character beyond any man of his day, should have selected Colonel Washington to be one of his military family, showed the high estimation in which Colonel Washington was held by him. And surely

no greater compliment could have been paid him as a man of ability and as a gentleman than that by General Lee.

When the war came on, our ways parted, never to reunite in this life—he to a position as aid to General Lee in West Virginia and I to a lieutenancy in the 17th Virginia Infantry. His death was a great shock to me, my association with him being closer than usually falls to men with such a difference in years. Some years prior to the war he became deeply interested in spiritual things; he became a vestryman in his parish church, held family prayers, and in this new life exemplified by his walk and conversation the teachings of our Divine Master and was prepared to go when He called him hence.

His call was a sudden one, but in it the love and mercy of God was shown, in that he was spared the humiliation of the reconstruction era, which crushed the hopes of so many of the survivors of our struggle, when God's face seemed to be hidden from us and hope found a grave in the hearts of so many of our survivors. Such, old comrades, ladies and gentlemen, is an imperfect sketch of Col. John A. Washington, whose portrait we come to-night to place among Virginia immortals—her best and bravest in her heroic age from 1861 to '65.

From the portraits of these men who look down upon us to-night, though varied in feature, they were one in heart and soul in their love and fealty for Old Virginia. For her they lived and fought and died, being as they were true followers and descendants of the pioneers, jurists, statesmen and soldiers that in bronze and marble adorn your public buildings and



parks to-day. When time shall efface these features that now call forth our love and admiration, and those effigies in bronze and marble crumble into dust, the lives and virtues of these men shall shine on forever and ever as stars to light the ages yet to come.







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